

very experienced in this sport who took all recommended precautions. The second dive was only to 25 or 30 feet. She has made numerous dives without difficulty both before and after the episodes in question and she developed the thigh numbness only when wearing the particular belt which I discussed and which was positioned exactly over the affected nerve.

Coincidence would be stressed beyond credibility to suggest that "a reasonable bubble in soft tissues surrounding the nerve" would occur in the same area only on the two occasions when this belt was worn and never before or since that time. Meralgia paresthetica invariably results from compression. A gas bubble miraculously finding its way to the same site twice is highly unlikely and I doubt that it could produce this syndrome under any circumstance.

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REFERENCE

1. Greenhouse AH, Page K: Scuba diver's thigh (Correspondence). *West J Med* 1986 Nov; 145:698-699

Body Odor Caused by Laundry Detergent

TO THE EDITOR: Body odor is a common, distressing and embarrassing phenomenon which is generally not talked about. A recent patient of mine, however, taught me something new about body odor.

Report of a Case

A 35-year-old man reported to me that for no apparent reason he had become aware of a very foul body odor problem some two weeks before coming to see me. Apparently his co-workers had also noted the problem and had mentioned it to him frequently. In spite of attempts to control this problem with a multitude of different antiperspirants and deodorants, the patient's problem persisted.

In an effort to discover the cause of this problem, routine laboratory tests were done; results were within normal limits. Getting back to basics, I found that the patient had started

using Fresh Start laundry detergent. I suggested he try a different laundry detergent. He did so and immediately noted a resolution of his problem. He then related that, now that he was aware of the problem, he could put on some clothing washed in Fresh Start laundry detergent, and within moments some kind of chemical reaction occurring between his skin chemistry and the laundry detergent residue on the clothing would produce a very foul odor.

The patient is now using a different laundry detergent and the problem has resolved.

I report this case partly for those who might have a similar problem and may not have thought of this particular solution. I also report it because I believe that the thousands of chemicals to which we are subjected every day in cosmetic products, household chemicals and other industrial and business uses are frequently not tested for their many potentially serious or bothersome effects.

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Definition of Hallucination

TO THE EDITOR: Drs Geoffrey L. Cummings and Bruce L. Miller's article on visual hallucinations¹ in the January issue was fascinating.

Under the category of differential diagnosis, the authors presented numerous causes for what they termed "hallucinatory visual changes" which ranged from ocular to central nervous system causes.

The definition of hallucination according to Dorland's Medical Dictionary is "a sense perception not founded upon objective reality." In the strictest sense many of these visual phenomena would be removed from the differential diagnosis if that definition were strictly adhered to from a medical standpoint as it most properly should be.

This does not detract at all from their fine article and the information it provides to the medical community; however, it is important to separate those disease processes that in fact have an actual pathologic basis from those that are perceived by the patient but have no objective founding in organic pathology.

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REFERENCE

1. Cummings JL, Miller BL: Visual hallucinations—Clinical occurrence and use in differential diagnosis. *West J Med* 1987 Jan; 146:46-51

Items submitted for the Correspondence section should be typed double-spaced (including references) with conventional margins. The text should not exceed 600 words.